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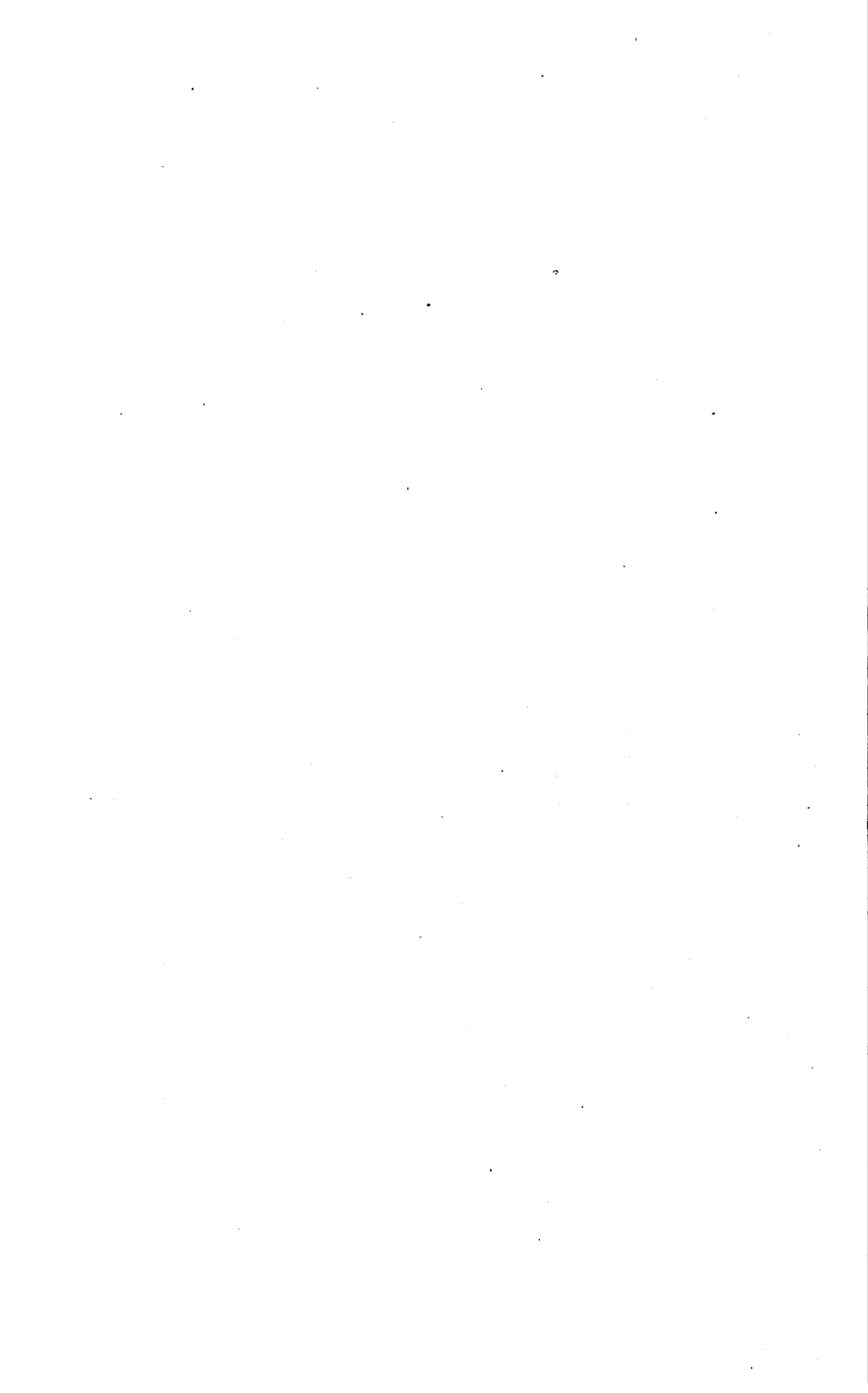
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THE  
ECCLESIASTICAL INSTITUTIONS OF  
HOLLAND, 18

TREATED WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE POSITION AND  
PROSPECTS OF THE MODERN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY.

A Report

PRESENTED TO THE HIBBERT TRUSTEES, AND PUBLISHED  
BY THEIR DIRECTION.

BY

PHILIP H. WICKSTEED, M.A.

Fidem rectumque colendo.

WILLIAMS AND NORGATE,  
14, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON;  
AND 20, SOUTH FREDERICK STREET, EDINBURGH.  
JOHNSON AND RAWSON, 89, MARKET STREET, MANCHESTER.

1875.



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“Nowhere in Europe is the conflict of opinion more earnest and sincere [than in Holland]; nowhere perhaps—not even in Germany—has theological science assumed a bolder and more decisive tone, though always within the limits of profound reverence, and an un-  
enfeebled attachment to the divine essence of the Gospel.”

J. J. TAYLER.

At the beginning of last year, I laid before a Sub-Committee of the Trustees of the Hibbert Fund a Report on the History of what is called in Holland "Modern Theology." This Report contained, together with a very rapid sketch of the progress of Theological studies and opinions in Holland from near the beginning of the century to the present time, a more detailed account of the principal works of the most eminent "modern" theologians, shewing the successive phases through which the school itself and its chief leaders have passed, and characterizing their present position.

As an Appendix to this Report, I drew up a short account of the most important of the Protestant ecclesiastical institutions of Holland, considered with special reference to their bearings upon the position and prospects of the "Moderns."

It appeared to the Sub-Committee to whom the Report was presented, that in the present state of ecclesiastical affairs in England, the subject of this Appendix might perhaps be of interest to a somewhat wider circle of readers than it was likely to reach in its manuscript form, and I was therefore requested to prepare it for publication.

In the present pamphlet, then, the original Appendix appears as an independent Report, and such information as to the "Modern

Theology" of Holland as it seemed absolutely necessary to supply has been thrown into a brief Appendix.

I have to thank Professor Kuenen, of Leiden, for his kindness in allowing me to read nearly the whole of the MS. to him, on occasion of a recent visit to Holland, and for various suggestions and corrections in matters of detail.

PHILIP H. WICKSTEED.

LONDON, *Jan.* 1875.

# REPORT

ON THE CHIEF

## PROTESTANT CHURCHES OF HOLLAND,

CONSIDERED WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE POSITION AND  
PROSPECTS OF THE "MODERN SCHOOL" OF THEOLOGY.\*

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It is difficult to make details of Church organization, and of the complicated relations of Church and State, anything but a dry and unattractive subject; but at the same time the problems which the Dutch Churches are endeavouring to solve bear so close an analogy to those which are agitating us in England, and there are so many curious parallels between some of the Dutch and some of the English Churches and parties, that a short examination of the Ecclesiastical History and Geography of Holland may perhaps be instructive, though it can hardly be entertaining.

It will be well to begin by gaining some idea of the

\* General authorities: Wijne's "Geschiedenis van het Vaderland" (History of the Fatherland), 1870; the "Staats-almanak" (Official Almanack of the Government) for 1871, checked by references to later editions; Scholten's "Leer der Hervormde Kerk" (Doctrine of the Reformed Church), 1861, &c. &c.

relative numerical strength of the various Churches which we are about to examine, both with regard to each other, and with regard to the other religious communions of Holland. The subjoined table will give us in the second column the percentage of the total population embraced in each Church in 1869, the latest period for which proper statistical data are as yet available.

We shall presently see that a system of "concurrent endowment" has grown up in Holland to a certain extent; and it will not be uninteresting therefore to add in a second column a statement of the official estimates of the pecuniary grants\* to the various bodies for 1875.

COMMUNITY.	Total number of Members in 1869.	Per cent. of Pop. in 1869.	Estimate of Grant for 1875.	Approx. value in English Money.
			f.	£.
Netherland Reformed Church.....	1,967,611	54·97	1,136,038	94,670
Christian Reformed (Separatists) .....	107,123	2·99	No grant.	—
Remonstrants .....	5,486	·15	19,100	1,592
Baptists .....	44,227	1·24	11,800	983
Evangelical Lutherans.	57,545	1·61	37,486	3,124
Restored Evangelical Lutherans .....	10,522	·29	4,325	360
Hernhütters .....	311	·01	No grant.	—
Anglican Episcopalians	456	·01	No grant.	—
Roman Catholics .....	1,307,765	36·53	519,404·775	43,284
Old Romanists .....	5,287	·15	7,500	625
Greeks .....	32	·00	No grant.	—
Netherland Israelites...	64,478	1·8	9,950	829
Portuguese Israelites ...	3,525	·1		
Unknown .....	5,161	·15	No grant.	—

\* In payment of salaries alone. Other grants, of very considerable amount, in payment of educational and miscellaneous expenses, are massed in the returns, and cannot be assigned to the various Churches. In the case of Jews, some of these items appear to be included in the estimate given above.

We will now proceed to a brief examination of the history and constitution of the chief\* Protestant Churches of Holland, viz., (a) The Reformed Church of the Netherlands; (b) The Remonstrant Brotherhood; (c) The Baptists (or Mennonites); (d) The Evangelical Lutherans.

The first of these Churches will occupy far more of our attention than the others, on account of its great preponderance over them in numbers.

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(a) THE REFORMED CHURCH OF THE NETHERLANDS.†

(Percentage of total population in 1869, % 54.97.)

The great Reformation was heralded in Holland, as elsewhere, by certain premonitory symptoms of a more or less isolated description; but no one could possibly have divined from them that the Calvinistic form of the Reformation

\* With the exception of that of the Christian Separated Communities or the Separatists. This Church is important in many respects, and its history has features of great interest in reference to the ecclesiastical history of the first half of this century; but since it represents, with few exceptions, the ultra-orthodox element of the lower strata of Dutch society, it has no connection with the special subject of this Report.

† Special authorities: "Het Kerkrecht der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk, historisch-critisch beschreven, door J. J. Prins" (The Ecclesiastical Law of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, historically and critically expounded, by J. J. Prins), 1870; "Scheiding van Staat en Kerk enz. door H. J. Smidt" (Separation of State and Church, &c.), 1872; "Jaarboekje voor de Nederlandsche, Hervormde Kerk, door H. M. C. van Oosterzee" (Annual for the Reformed Church, &c.), 1871, 1872, 1873; "De Reglementen voor de Ned. Her. Kerk, door G. Bruña" (Ordinances of the Reformed Church, &c.), 1872; "Rapport van de Commissie van Advies ter zake eener Reorganisatie enz." (Report of the Committee of Advice on the Question of a Reorganization, &c.), 1873; together with a number of controversial pamphlets, reports, &c., of 1872, 1873 and 1874.

would ultimately prevail in the country. Indeed, the great Reformation itself at first gained ground in Holland chiefly through the writings of Luther ; but during the long struggle with Spain, many causes combined with the great influence of certain French preachers who settled in the country to give a Calvinistic turn to the Reformation. The successive Synods or Conferences of the Dutch Protestants, held at first on foreign soil, but afterwards in various towns of Holland, became gradually more and more strongly Calvinistic. William the Silent formally passed from the Lutheran to the Reformed (Calvinistic) Church ; and by the time the "United Netherlands" were in a position to attempt the consolidation of their political and ecclesiastical affairs on an independent basis, Protestant Holland was to all intents and purposes Calvinistic.

The relations between Church and State at this time were very chaotic. During the war with Spain, the ample possessions of the Catholic Church had very naturally been looked upon as a legitimate source from which to draw the "sinews of war ;" but in the confusion of the times they often fell into unscrupulous hands, and much, no doubt, was irretrievably lost to Church and State alike.

A rough distinction was made between the "spiritual" funds or possessions which constituted the means of the various "brotherhoods" and "orders" of the Catholic Church, and the "Church" funds, &c., which were applied directly or indirectly to the maintenance of public worship and certain allied objects.

Now, in 1581, the States-General formally placed the "spiritual" funds under State control for secular or other purposes, at the discretion of each Province. Some portions of this property were converted into money to meet the necessities of the State, others were diverted to charitable

or educational purposes, and others administered, at first by a "receiver-general," and afterwards by "spiritual counting-houses" (geestelijke Kantoren), as they are technically called, in support of the ministers, &c., of the Reformed Church.

The "Church" funds, on the other hand, were gradually placed by the various Provinces under the supervision of suitable persons to be administered on behalf of the congregations in the maintenance of the buildings and the worship of the *Reformed* (i.e. Calvinistic) *Church*, for which the temporal power further provided in various ways, including, where necessary, payments in money from the national, or rather the provincial, coffers.

The Reformed Church, then, was virtually the State Church of the United Netherlands, but the relations between Church and State were very far from being comfortable. Calvinism, it must be remembered, implies not only a system of doctrine, but a system of Church government by presbyters and synods; and the "autonomy of the Church" is a very essential feature of this system. On the other hand, the temporal power was by no means disposed to renounce the rights over the Church which it purchased by its material support.

Hence the constant collisions between Church and State characteristic of the early history of the Reformed Church in Holland. These differences of opinion came to a head in the celebrated controversy between Arminius and Gomarus, continued by the Remonstrants (Arminians) and the orthodox Calvinists. The former, while departing from the Calvinistic doctrine in several important points, maintained the right of the State to take part in ecclesiastical affairs, while the latter were zealous in their maintenance alike of



the doctrinal "cor ecclesiæ" and of the autonomy of the Church.

The celebrated Synod of Dort, in 1618-19, was intended to put an end to this state of things. It established a rigidly Calvinistic system of doctrine, but was not equally thorough in its maintenance of the autonomy of the Church. Though never formally sanctioned by the Government, the system of the Synod of Dort was gradually introduced in its essential features into all the Provinces of Holland, and the ecclesiastical constitution which it drew up remains in force, to some extent, to this day.

The aphorism, "Ecclesia sequitur curiam," has never been more forcibly illustrated than in the history of the Reformed Church of Holland. The "United Netherlands," as every student of their history knows, were only united after a very loose and inconvenient fashion, and constituted, in point of fact, a group of "Allied Republics," rather than a single country. So, too, the Church was never an organic whole as long as the Republic lasted. Practically, it was a collection of independent Provincial Churches. The Constitution drawn up by the Synod of Dort did indeed provide for National Synods, to be held once in three years; but, as a matter of fact, they were never held. The local "Communities" were governed by (mostly self-elected) Church-councils, and were united into "Classes," which, again, were governed by "Provincial Synods." These Synods corresponded with each other, and endeavoured by this means to secure a certain amount of co-operation and unity amongst themselves, but without any marked success.

In 1651, the Reformed Church became *de jure* what it had long been *de facto*, viz. the Established Church of the Dutch Republic. The State charged itself with the main-

tenance of the Church, its preachers and its institutions, so far as local effort and resource failed to meet their requirements, and the whole education of the country was placed in the hands of the Church. All public servants must belong to it, and the Theological Faculties at the National Universities were maintained exclusively in its interests. Other Churches—Unitarians and Socinians always excepted—were tolerated in an intolerant sort of way, rather by leniency in the application than by justice in the framing of the laws, and of course all had to contribute to the maintenance of the dominant Church.

Heresy-hunting within the limits of the Reformed Church itself was carried on with some vigour, but the want of any central authority often made it possible for a heretic, when hunted out of one Province, to find honourable recognition in another.

The Church had to pay a heavy price for the patronage it received from the State. The civil authorities had extensive and vaguely-defined powers, not only over the funds and government of the Church in general, but over each local community in particular. The "Village Bailiff" must have been a sad thorn in the Pastor's flesh, for not only had this functionary a sitting in the Church-council and considerable general power over the pecuniary and other affairs of the Church, which he sometimes exercised in a very arbitrary manner, but his sanction was needed before the Pastor could leave his flock, for however short a time, on business or for a holiday, and he had the curious privilege of deciding how long the service ought to last, and of inflicting a pecuniary fine on the Pastor if he exceeded the limit assigned him!

Such was the state of things until the fall of the Dutch Republic in 1795, when the so-called "Patriots" attempted

to bring out a Dutch edition of the great French Revolution. Of course the separation of Church and State was a part of their programme, and in 1796 it was determined that "henceforth no privileged or dominant Church can or shall be endured; and moreover all resolutions and proclamations of the late States-General springing from the old system of union of Church and State are to be held void."

The dominant Church, however, was "endured" for a year or two, until, in 1798, more definite regulations on the subject were attempted; and, with that delicious simplicity characteristic of paper constitutions, the gigantic and complicated question of the severance of Church and State was settled in a few lines. "All religions are alike in the eye of the State, and no privileges or disqualifications are attached to the confession of any religious doctrine. Every religious society, under the protection of the State, is to look to its own interests and provide for its own necessities." Spiritual and Ecclesiastical property is to be confiscated and devoted to educational and charitable purposes, except the churches and parsonages, which are to be divided amongst the various religious bodies in proportion to their numbers. The salaries, &c., hitherto paid by the State, are to be stopped in three years. The Theological Faculties at the Universities are to be done away with. National education is to be taken out of the hands of the Reformed Church. The State, on its side, is to leave the Church in the enjoyment of complete autonomy; and contents itself with "strongly recommending" every one to worship the Supreme Being!

This sweeping act of disestablishment and disendowment ignored the innumerable local intricacies and other more general complications which rendered it impossible to sever at a single blow institutions which had grown into each

other for centuries ; and, except that it produced a good deal of anarchy, the proclamation remained a dead letter.

In 1801, a reaction had already set in, and the government of Holland became Oligarchical rather than Republican. The principle of severance of Church and State was re-affirmed, but permission was given to every one over fourteen years old to enrol him (or her ?) self as a member of some religious body, and it was announced that some system of "concurrent endowment," based on this register, was to be drawn up. *Meanwhile*, the ministers of the Reformed Church were to have their salaries secured to them by the State. There was, perhaps, no intention of ever carrying out the "concurrent endowment" scheme ; at any rate, no steps were ever taken in that direction ; but during the life-time of this and the next Constitution (1805), "for a handful of gold the Church sacrificed her independence and her development to the State ;" or, as another authority prefers to express it, "the interests of Religion and the Church were earnestly watched over, and everything seemed to be settling down upon a firm basis once more."

In 1806, Holland became a kingdom under Louis Napoleon. The King desired all his subjects to enjoy equal rights and privileges in the matter of religion, and, though himself a Catholic, he made considerable grants to all the chief Protestant sects. All Church funds that were then under public control\* were to pass into the national coffers, and "all the salaries of the clergy were to be paid out of the public funds." Louis, therefore, did much towards establishing a system of "concurrent endowment."

In 1810, another political change came over Holland. It

\* i.e. the original "spiritual goods" under the control of the "geestelijke Kantoren," not the "Church goods" under control of the local managers.

was incorporated as a Province of the Empire of France, and the Church sank very low. Salaries were promised but not paid, and Napoleon treated the Church as a mere tool of the State.

The year 1813 brought independence to Holland once more, and the "Sovereign Prince" (afterwards William I.) pursued essentially the policy of Louis with regard to the Churches. Baptists, Lutherans, Remonstrants, Reformed and Catholics, all were recognized and all received pecuniary support from the Government.

In 1815, the "Sovereign Prince" became King, and Holland was a monarchy. The "Constitution" of 1814 contained some important regulations with regard to ecclesiastical affairs, which were embodied, with some not insignificant alterations, in that of 1815, according to which "the salaries, pensions and other revenues of whatsoever kind, which are *at present* enjoyed by the various religious communities or their ministers, are assured to the same communities for the future." Beyond this, the Constitution of 1815 gave the King powers by which, "in the case of ministers who have hitherto drawn an insufficient salary or none at all from the national coffers, a salary may be given, or the existing salary increased." On the other hand, all the power over the Churches which the King was supposed to retain, consisted simply in his right and duty of seeing that the funds thus granted were in reality applied to their legitimate purposes.

Thus, after all the dire confusion of the period we have hurried through, the financial state of things existing *de facto* on August 24, 1815, was suddenly arrested and perpetuated, though power was given to *supplement*, but not to *cut down*, its provisions. It may well be imagined that every species of anomaly and irregularity was thus legalized.

The government of the Church had remained unaltered

since the Synod of Dort, though several attempts had been made to re-organize it; but it had naturally fallen into decay and become a very dead-alive affair during all the turmoil and neglect of the period through which we have run.

The King (William I.) now determined to re-organize the Reformed Church; and though the Constitution gave him no power whatever to do so, yet his unbounded popularity, the deep necessity of some such measure, and the weakness of the Church itself, all combined to make his attempt successful. After some consultation with a representative body of pastors, who were supposed to some extent to originate the scheme, the King imposed his new Constitution upon the Reformed Church by Royal Decree of January 7, 1816.

The Church-councils remained unaltered. Classic Assemblies, Classic Governments, Provincial Church Governments (in place of the old Provincial Synods), and the General Synod for the whole kingdom, were the main instruments of the new Constitution. The King nominated the members of the various governing bodies in the first instance, and permanently retained very considerable power over their composition. Moreover, no alteration in the constitution of the Church could take place without his sanction.

More than one chapter in the ecclesiastical history of Holland shews clearly enough that the King was far more inclined to exceed the ample powers he now possessed of taking a part in Church affairs, than to let them become a dead letter; and although the undefined and vexatious powers of the local civic authorities in Church matters were now removed, yet the autonomy of the Church was anything but complete. Such as it was, however, the Synod which met every year was its highest organ.

The very first Synod which was called together under the new Constitution took an important step, which deserves notice on account both of the celebrity of the controversies to which it gave rise and of its bearing upon our special subject—the position of the Moderns. Previously to 1816, every pastor of the Reformed Church had been obliged to sign a declaration that he “felt and believed from his heart that all the articles and clauses of doctrine contained in the Confession and the Catechism of the Reformed Churches, together with the declarations on certain points of the afore-said doctrine made by the National Synod held at Dortrecht in 1619, agreed in everything with God’s Word.” Now it was felt by the Synod that this declaration could not be honestly made by the clergy of the nineteenth century, and accordingly they took the obvious but perhaps unparalleled course of substituting for it something that they thought might be signed with a clear conscience! The doctrinal portion of the formula of subscription, as modified by the Synod of 1816, ran as follows: “We declare . . . that we accept in good faith and heartily believe *the doctrine which is contained, in accordance with God’s Holy Word, in the accepted symbols of uniformity\** of the Netherland Reformed Church” (de leer, welke, overeenkomstig Gods Heilig Woord, in de aangemene formulieren enz. is vervat). The original is rather more ambiguous than the English, and some time afterwards a hot controversy, known as the “quia and quatenus” controversy, arose as to whether the doctrine of the Church was to be accepted *because* (quia) it agreed with God’s Holy Word, or *in as far as* (quatenus) it agreed with it. The full bearing of this controversy on the position of the Moderns and liberals generally will not be perceived

\* i.e. the Netherland Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of the Synod of Dort.

unless the fact be noticed that the Synod of 1817 had drawn a very clear distinction between "the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments" and "God's Word *contained in the Scriptures,*" &c. In 1835, the Synod was asked to define the meaning of the formula of subscription, but simply declined to do so, and was consequently besieged with memorials from year to year, until at last, in 1841, it declared that the formula meant that the subscriber accepted the *spirit* and *essence* of the confession of faith. It is difficult to see how this meaning can be extracted from the words; but the decision had two great advantages,—it was vague and it was a compromise.

From about this period, several causes combined to make the Church more independent of the Crown. William II. was by no means so much inclined to take an active part in Church affairs as his father had been; and the growth of public feeling and the course of political events, which culminated in a new and greatly liberalized "Constitution" in 1848, were emphatically favourable to a revision of the ecclesiastical Constitution and an increase of the autonomy of the Church. Accordingly it soon became possible gradually to transfer many of the Royal prerogatives (such as the nomination of members for the governing bodies of the Church) to the Church itself, and finally to draw up a revision of the Church Constitution of 1816, which was promulgated, with eleven reservations, by Royal Decree on March 23rd, 1852, early in the reign of the present King, William III. The "eleven reservations" have been recently withdrawn, and we may consider that the Reformed Church of Holland is now practically self-governing, and has been so, to a great extent, ever since 1852. This revised Constitution, which emanated from ecclesiastical, not temporal sources, is still in force in its essential features, and will



therefore demand our attention presently. Meanwhile two points require special notice. The first is a further change in the formula of subscription made in 1854, and the second is the change in the method of electing pastors, which came into force in 1867.

The formula of subscription drawn up in 1854 was intended to give a definite shape to the "essence and spirit" interpretation given in 1841 to the formula of 1816, and as it is still in force it will be desirable to give it at length. "We, the undersigned, having been admitted by the Provincial Church Government of . . . . to the public service of the Gospel in the Netherland Reformed Church, do hereby declare in all integrity, that, in accordance with the fundamental principle of the Christian Church in general and the Reformed Church in particular, we accept with our whole heart and believe without guile God's Holy Word contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Covenants; that it is our intention and desire faithfully to uphold the spirit and the essence of the doctrine which is embraced in the accepted symbols of uniformity of the Netherland Reformed Church; that we will therefore preach to the community earnestly and from our hearts, according to our gifts, the whole counsel of God, in particular His grace in Jesus Christ as the only ground of salvation; that we will apply ourselves in all zeal to the furtherance of religious knowledge and of Christian faith and life, and will advance and cultivate order and concord; and that we will thus, looking to the help which is from above, carefully take to heart the interests of God's kingdom in general, and in particular those of the Netherland Reformed Church, and, after our power, work towards the furtherance of the same; and we bind ourselves to all the above by this our signature; and if we shall be found to have behaved contrary to

any part of this declaration, we bind ourselves to submit, accordingly, to the decisions of the qualified Ecclesiastical Assemblies.”

The framing of this declaration was considered at the time, and for many years afterwards, so liberal in spirit that no one who had any business to be in a Christian Church at all could have any difficulty in signing it. Scholten,\* in 1862, and even Pierson,† in 1863, spoke of it as almost ideal. The “Moderns,”‡ then, found no difficulty in this quarter. We shall return to the question of subscription and its bearing on the moral position of the “Moderns,” and shall then mention in a single word a controversy on the subject which made a great noise at the time.

The other measure to which I have referred, viz. the change in the mode of electing pastors, has had a very decisive influence, for a time at least, on the material position and prospects of the “Modern” preachers, and must be dealt with in some detail. It will form the introduction to a rapid sketch of the main features of the Reformed Church Government as at present organized.

The members of the Reformed Church in each city form one single congregation. Thus there is only one congregation or community of the Reformed Church in Amsterdam, though it has twenty-eight pastors; and so with the other large cities. These pastors are not attached to special churches, but preach at the several churches in rotation, though, nominally at least, each has the *pastoral* charge of a special district. The whole congregation is governed by one Church-council, in which all the pastors (where there are more than one) and a corresponding number of elders

\* The veteran leader of the Modern school.

† Then a prominent representative of the extreme Left of the Modern school.

‡ See Appendix.

and deacons have a sitting. Now, before the year 1867, the Church-council elected its own members whenever vacancies occurred, and also chose the pastor or pastors of the community. The Church-councils were, as a rule, disposed to look with favour upon the "Modern" movement; and though in some cases a Modern Church-council appointed one or more orthodox pastors with a view to meeting the desires of the majority or of a large section of the congregation over which it presided, yet, on the whole, the predilections of the Church-councils became evident enough in the selection of pastors, and the prospects of a young "Modern" who entered the Church were, at any rate, no worse than those of his orthodox compeer.

The obvious inadequacy of this self-electing system, however, led to its abolition, and it was decided that, from the year 1867 onwards, the congregation should not only elect its own Church-council, but also its own pastors. The importance of this change, and its bearing on the position of the Moderns, is obvious. A working majority of the members of a congregation now disposes of *all* the appointments, and a most cruel tyranny has been the result; for, however large the minority may be, it cannot select even *one* of the pastors, no matter how many there are! In most cases there is a majority of orthodox votes, partly because of the superior discipline always characteristic of orthodoxy and conservatism, partly because the "Moderns" have not, of course, in the few years of their existence, been able to convert an absolute majority of the Church members to their very radical departure from the old lines of faith. The only wonder is that they have a majority in any places at all, and that they have so large a minority in most. On the other hand, small mercy is to be expected by the "Moderns" from the orthodox majorities. A striking instance of this

recently occurred in Utrecht, where the Church-council is orthodox, and has apparently been deputed (as is often the case) by the congregation to select its pastors. The Utrecht congregation has ten pastors, and a memorial was presented, signed by a large number of respected and influential persons, shewing that the memorialists, while feeling the greatest respect for the talents and the personal qualities of their pastors, could not disguise the fact that they did not feel sufficient sympathy with their religious ministrations to enable them to attend public worship with profit or pleasure. The memorialists called the attention of the Council to the deplorable results, in alienation from the Church and starvation of spiritual life, which sprang from this state of things, and hoped that when other vacancies occurred, at least one might be filled by a pastor who would be able to meet the well-known wants of the memorialists. To this petition the Church-council answered, that they were at a loss to understand what their "beloved brethren" wanted. They endeavoured to find them pastors who preached the Gospel; what more could they want? This—and a hint that the memorialists stood in very considerable need of such Gospel food as the Council had provided for them—was all that could be got!\* It is a significant fact that, very shortly after these events, about eighty students of the University of Utrecht (most of them students of theology, and intending therefore to become pastors of the Reformed Church) applied to the Remonstrants to assign the students some seats in their Church. Maronier, a well-known "Modern," is the Remonstrant pastor at Utrecht.

It will be seen from this illustration that the change of 1867 not only places the "Modern" laity in a very

\* It is but fair to say that I no longer have the correspondence before me as I write, but I believe I have not misrepresented it.

unsatisfactory position, but makes the prospects of the "Modern" pastors so bad, that it is almost impossible for a young man to contemplate them without being disheartened, unless he is inspired by a very rare degree of zealous and self-sacrificing love of his work. No doubt this is the real cause of the portentous diminution of the numbers of the theological students at Leiden (the head-quarters of the "Moderns"), and in part also of the fact, noticeable in Holland as elsewhere, that the theological students are now often drawn from a lower social stratum than was formerly the case.

This is one of the many phenomena which make a complete re-organization of the Church seem an absolute necessity, if it is to continue to exist; but before the gravity of the situation can be rightly understood, it will be necessary to give a sketch of the organization which, with one or two recent modifications to be pointed out presently, is still in force.

I. The unit of Church Government, as we have seen, is the local community or congregation. A distinction is made between the ordinary members (*leden*) and the special members (*lidmaten*) of the congregation. The former are, in point of fact, all who by parentage or otherwise may be supposed to belong to the Reformed Church, and have not openly separated themselves or been separated from it. The latter are those only who have been formally received after examination as Church members. It is from these alone that the "voters" are drawn, and it is therefore of importance that we should know the exact conditions of membership. The proposed member, then, must shew an adequate acquaintance with the Christian doctrine of faith and morals, and with scriptural and ecclesiastical history, especially that of the Reformation. He must then make a

confession of faith. No special form of words is prescribed, and the candidate for membership is free to say just what he likes in his confession. This examination, &c., is conducted (on behalf of the Church-council) by a pastor, "assisted"\* by one or more elders. If the result of the examination is satisfactory, the candidate must answer the three following questions *in the affirmative*:

1st. Do you profess belief in God the Father, the Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, and in the Holy Spirit?

2nd. Is it your intention and desire to persevere, by God's grace, in this confession, to forsake sin, to strive after sanctification, and faithfully to follow your Saviour in prosperity and adversity, in life and in death, as beseems His true confessors?

3rd. Do you promise zealously to work, according to your power, for the weal of the kingdom of God in general and of the Netherland Reformed Church in particular, under the observance of her ordinances?

If all this is satisfactorily gone through, the candidate is formally admitted as a Church member (*lidmaat*).

A *male* Church member of a year or more standing, who has attained his majority (twenty-three), is, unless there is some reason to the contrary, a voter.

The voters choose the elders and deacons of the congregation, and also select its pastors; directly, if there are not more than a hundred of them; indirectly, if there are; unless, in either case, they have deputed their Church-councils to perform these duties for them for a term of

\* The original word, "bijgestaan," may have either the English or the French sense of "assisted," and has given rise to a hot controversy. Vid. *infra*.

years, as nearly one-half of the whole number of congregations have done.

II. The Church-council consists of the pastor or pastors and a certain number (fixed by the Council itself in accordance with the requirements of the place) of elders and deacons, appointed for not more than four years.

The Council exercises a general superintendence over the congregation, manages its business (except the finances), attends to the proper conduct of public worship and religious instruction, admits new members, and in general represents the congregation.

The deacons have special charge of the poor.

The Council also appoints elders (in office as such at the time) to represent it in the Classic Assembly (see III.).

Under certain conditions, a distinction is made between the functions of the "Great Council" and the "Small Council," upon which the deacons do not sit; but it is needless to consider the matter here.

The congregations of each district are united into Classes, and each Classis is represented by its Classic Assembly and regulated by its Classic Government.

III. The Classic Assemblies meet in June, and consist of all the pastors of the Classis and a number of elders not exceeding that of the pastors. Their chief function is to nominate the members of the Classic Government and the Provincial Church Government; but they also perform certain other functions, and have a consulting voice in all legislation directly affecting themselves or the Church-councils.

IV. The Classic Governments consist of certain officers, two or more preachers, according to circumstances, and one elder for every two preachers, all chosen for three years by

the respective Classic Assemblies. These Governments form a court of appeal from the Church-councils in all matters of Church discipline, and have immediate jurisdiction over preachers, candidates in theology, elders and deacons, who are not subject to the Church-councils. They have other administrative and judicial functions; but only a consulting voice (and that only in some branches) in legislation.

V. Each of the ten Provinces of Holland has its own Provincial Church Government, elected by the Classic Assemblies, each of which deposes one pastor for three years. For every two pastors thus elected, one elder (or ex-elder), who must already have held office in some higher governing body than a Church-council, is elected. Thus one-half of the Classic Assemblies (in turn) appoint an elder as well as a pastor to their respective Provincial Church Governments. These Governments are courts of appeal from the Classic Governments, and deal, in the first instance, with very grave charges against pastors, &c., and with differences between two or more Classic Governments. They also conduct the ecclesiastical examination of the candidates in theology, who must already have passed their academical examination; none being recognized who have not had a University education. They depute members to the General Synod, and have a consulting voice and a veto in matters of legislation.

VI. The Synod is the highest representative body of the Church. It consists of twenty-one members, five of whom have no votes, and one of whom is not present unless the matter in discussion has reference to finances. Its composition is a matter of eager debate at present, and must therefore be given in detail.

The Synod consists, then, of one representative (a pastor) from each Provincial Church Government (ten in all); one



from the Committee of the Walloon Church ;\* one from the Church Government of Limburg ; † one from the Committee of the Churches of the East and West Indies ; three elders appointed in rotation by the Provincial Church Governments and the Committee of the Walloon Churches ; a permanent Secretary ‡ (without a vote) ; in cases of finance, the Quæstor-General § (without a vote) ; and three Professors (without votes) appointed by the Theological faculties of Leiden, Utrecht and Groningen.

The members of the Synod are appointed only for a single year. The Synod exercises a general superintendence over the Church, receives reports, &c., from the lower governing bodies, acts as a court of appeal from the Provincial Church Governments, and exercises a great variety of executive and judicial functions. It derives its great importance, however, from the fact that, at least nominally, it is the supreme legislative body.

Its supremacy, however, is very far from absolute. It first prepares a law and then submits it to the Provincial Church Governments. In certain cases these Governments forward it to the Classic Governments in their "resorts," and all the bodies thus consulted report directly to the *next* Synod (for the Synod only meets once a year), with suggestions or criticisms. The Synod may (and often does) drop the whole thing here ; or it may once more submit the law, either in its original form or altered according to suggestions received

\* For the sake of simplicity I have omitted all mention of the Walloon Churches, which are a part of the Reformed Church, but have their own separate government under the Synod.

† Limburg stands in a peculiar position with regard to the Church Government, which it is not necessary to speak of here. It has no Provincial Church Government.

‡ Appointed by the Synod.

§ Appointed for an indefinite period by the Synod.

(or otherwise), to the Provincial Church Governments. If a majority of these vote against it, it falls to the ground; but if a majority (or in cases affecting the constitution of the Church a majority of two-thirds) approve of it, it becomes law.

VII. The Committee of the Synod, appointed by the Synod, but not from its own members, represents the Synod between its sittings, and is then the highest court of appeal, &c. It is often entrusted by the Synod with very important preparatory work, but of course has no *legislative* powers. It is responsible to the Synod for everything it does.

Such is a rapid and exceedingly incomplete sketch of those features of the Ecclesiastical Constitution of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands which are of most importance to us.\*

Its defects are numerous and obvious. The complete change of the *personnel* of the Synod from year to year, in itself makes any continuity of government almost impos-

\* All these bodies, from the Church-councils to the Synod, have the administration of certain funds, and in some cases are in receipt of Government grants, but the finances proper of the Reformed Church are not under their control. Until quite recently, the Government exercised a direct and indirect control over the finances, which were managed for each congregation by a body of representatives distinct from the Church-council. The Reformed Church had for many years protested against being held in pupillage by the State, whereas all her sister communities were allowed to manage their own affairs. At last, in 1866, Pické, the Governmental Minister of the Reformed cultus, appointed a "General College of Superintendence" to manage the finances of the Reformed Church for three years, and then hand them over to the Church itself. The powers, &c., of the College were not defined however, and its members applied for instructions. Pické was now superseded by Schimmelpenninck, who said that further instructions were certainly needed, and may therefore be presumed to have intended to give them; but he was superseded by Lijnden van Sandenburg, who required some time to get up the subject, but finally, in 1868, gave the College a letter of instructions, which they had

sible. The connection between the Synod and its Committee, who have no direct personal communication with each other except through the permanent Secretary and the Moderamen, who attend the meetings of both, is highly unsatisfactory. The judicial apparatus, with its endless delays and appeals, is intolerably cumbersome. The legislative apparatus is little better. The representative character of the Synod is most imperfect, for the following reasons: (a) The representative of the East and West Indian Churches, which are State Churches and stand in no official connection with the Netherland Reformed Church, is out of place there. (b) It is further urged that the three Professors do not represent the Church, being appointed by the Crown. They have no votes, however, and their advice is of the greatest value, so that this can hardly be considered a valid objection. It is far otherwise with (c) the ludicrous disproportion between the numbers represented by each representative member of the Synod. Each Provincial Church Government sends one

hardly read before it was countermanded by another Minister, Van Bosse, who had just come into office. The College was now informed what its powers were, and also that no extension of its term of office would be granted, so that it must do the work of three years in about one! The College did its best, and drew up a provisional scheme just in time to save the finances of the Church from a simple crash. The state of things is still highly unsatisfactory. The Synod desires to have control over the finances of the Church, but some of the congregations violently resist its claims. Unhappily, the affair has been made a party question, and threatens to become very troublesome. No conception can be formed of the confusion and complexity of the whole question—of which the fragment of history just given may be taken as a specimen—and, as it does not immediately affect the questions in which we are most interested, perhaps I shall be excused for not entering upon it further. I must remind my readers, however, that the whole question has reference to “Church goods” alone, and not the “Spiritual goods,” which have ceased to exist as separate funds: a most important part of the finances of the Church is still managed by the State, therefore.

deputy to the Synod. The Province of North Holland embraces 198 communities; that of Friesland, 214; and that of Drenthe, but 51 (much smaller, on an average, than those of Holland and Friesland); yet each is represented by *one* member of the Synod. Nay, even the Walloon Committee and the Church Government of Limburg, representing 17 and 16 congregations respectively, each send one representative to the Synod. The almost exclusively clerical composition of the Synod is also a matter of complaint.

Several attempts have been made from time to time to introduce some modifications into this system; but it may be doubted whether all its defects would have led to any change, had it not been for the strained relation in which the two extreme parties within the Church stand towards each other.

In the first place, the "Moderns" have every reason to be dissatisfied with their position. The "Modern" laity, when in a minority, as is generally the case, can never get a pastor of their own school, and the week-day lectures, by leading members of the party, which have been organized now for some years, are of course but a meagre substitute. But this is not all. The orthodox majorities of the Church-councils frequently throw every kind of obstacle in the way of the admission of members who do not come up to their standard of orthodoxy. The assistance, or at any rate the presence, of one or more elders (see p. 23) is required at the examination for membership, and occasionally every one of the elders has simply refused to attend when a Modern pastor has presented his pupils for admission. Others have "assisted" in the examination by asking a series of crucial doctrinal questions, and refusing to "pass" the candidate on account of his heresy. In some cases the affair has been kept hanging for months, and the examinees have been called up again and again to answer further questions,

or give explanations of what they have already said or written. We have seen that they *must* answer three questions in the affirmative (p. 23); but as these questions are very indefinite from a doctrinal point of view, and as the personal confession of faith gives the examinee an opportunity of explaining in detail the sense in which he accepts them, this cannot be regarded as a serious *moral* complication. Recently, however, some pupils of Visser, the Modern pastor at Harlingen, expressly stated, in answering "Yes" to the questions, that they did so only in the sense explained by their confessions of faith. The Church-council declared that such a qualification was unconstitutional, and refused to admit the examinees as members. The affair has been carried up, with varying result, through all the courts, and has finally gone in favour of the Church-council, though merely on technical grounds.

The "Modern" laity, then, are in a very unenviable position as regards Church life, and though their pastors are free to some extent from the direct tyranny of the Church-councils, not being under their jurisdiction, they are by no means comfortable. In the first place, they have no prospect of promotion, and are in many instances compelled to work "with the assistance" of a bitterly hostile council, which does its best to frustrate them; and of course it is very disheartening to see those, upon whose religious education they have been working for years, cut off from all influence in Church matters and excluded, as unclean, from the fold.

The moral position, too, of a "Modern" candidate in theology, and to some extent of a "Modern" pastor, is open to one very serious objection. It is true they have no liturgical service to perform, and are therefore saved from the one constantly repeated act which makes the moral

position of our own Broad-church clergy so mournfully equivocal. Well may Kuenen\* say, when speaking of the absence of such forms, "Moreover, we enjoy the privilege of not being bound to any ancient liturgy. In conducting public worship and the ceremonies of the Church, the preacher is free. When contrasting our poverty in this respect with the wealth of the Church of England, for example, we might well be tempted to complain. But it is better to be deprived of a certain measure of æsthetic enjoyment than to purchase it at the price of that freedom with which we cannot dispense."

So far all is well; but it is useless to disguise the fact that the formula of subscription (see p. 18) which all the clergy of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands are required to sign when they enter her service, is such as no "Modern" can accept in a natural sense. That men so fearless, so honest, so self-sacrificing, so consistent, as the "Modern" pastors of Holland, should be able to bring themselves to comply with this humiliating condition of service in the Church, is a painful and in some sense a surprising phenomenon; and shews what a hurtful and bewildering effect the theory of subscription has even upon the clearest intellects and the most tender consciences. It is true that this is but a gnat in comparison with the camels swallowed by the liberal clergy of England; true that the "Modern" leaders are now bending all their energies, not to the *justifying*, but to the *rectifying*, of their position; true that the prominence of this comparatively small matter is the strongest evidence of the general purity of their position; but, in spite of this, the position is *pro tanto* a false position, and those who are in it are beginning, or will soon

\* One of the leaders of the Modern school.

begin, to feel that "it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle" than for an honest man to enter a creed-bound Church and retain his honesty.

The history of the awakening of the conscience of the "Moderns" upon this point is curious. I have already stated that, in 1862 and 1863, Scholten and Pierson looked upon the formula of subscription as almost ideal. Of course the orthodox party indignantly declared that the "Moderns" had no right to sign the formula, but the "Moderns" themselves declared that it exactly expressed their own views. In 1864 and 1865, one or two memorials were presented to the Synod, desiring the abolition of all doctrinal restrictions and pledges, together with a flood of memorials desiring an increased stringency in them. Special committees considered these memorials and reported in favour of the maintenance of the doctrine of the Reformed Church as set forth in the formula of subscription. Amongst the signatures to these reports occurs, in one instance, that of Scholten; in the other, that of Kuenen.

About this time, Pierson, having completely changed his views on the subscription question, and having left the Reformed Church, was engaged in a hot controversy with Réville upon the right of the "Moderns" to remain within the Church of their fathers. Pierson declared that their position was radically unsound; Réville maintained that it was good. Busken Huet, who had been a sort of free-lance in the theological strife, was now outside the Church, and, coming to Pierson's rescue, he attacked his former allies, the "Moderns," apparently with great bitterness, not to say virulence. The attack from such unexpected quarters rather startled the "Moderns," and produced a greater impression than a whole library from orthodox pens would have made. It drew from Kuenen a little pamphlet in

defence of the "Modern" position, in which he declared that, taken in its setting, with reference to its history and in the light thrown upon it by other portions of the ordinances of the Church, the formula of subscription bound the subscriber to nothing which the "Moderns" could not accept in good faith. At the same time, he admitted that the formula was antiquated, and that it would be highly desirable eventually, *but not at present*, to substitute a simple declaration that the subscriber desires and intends "to work in the Netherland Reformed Church for the fulfilment of her object,—viz. the furtherance of religion and morality in the spirit of Jesus,—in accordance with the regulations of her ordinances, and after the dictates of his own conscience."

During the last few years, opinion has ripened upon the subject. Most of the Moderns now earnestly desire to get rid of all doctrinal restrictions, and many of their more moderate and liberal opponents see the folly of attempting to retain them.

In the Synod of 1872, Diest Lorgion, Professor of Theology at Groningen, brought forward a scheme for removing all doctrinal pledges whatsoever in the case of pastors and of members of the Reformed Church. Scholten supported a modified scheme which would practically give almost unlimited doctrinal freedom. In this latter form the Synod provisionally accepted the project, and submitted it to the Provincial Church Governments for criticism and suggestions. We shall soon see why the question has not been decided in this form.

What has been said already will have shewn abundantly, 1, that the Moderns have every reason to be dissatisfied with their position; and, 2, that they are now doing their best to make it more satisfactory.



It remains to explain the reasons why the orthodox are dissatisfied. In the first place, the mere existence of the "Moderns" in the Church of Calvin and of the Fathers of Dort is an abomination to them, and they are too impatient to be content with the gradual process of elimination and starvation which they are now carrying on. Moreover, their ultimate success seems doubtful. The process of purging the various governing bodies of the Church from Modernism is a slow and indirect one. In some places, the excessive zeal of the orthodox has even thrown into the "Modern" camp many liberals who do not sympathize with the "Modern" theological position; and in the struggle for existence, the "anti-confessionalists" of all degrees are closing their ranks and imitating the compact discipline of the "confessionalists" or ultra-orthodox. Thus a liberal reaction has set in, at least in some districts. Again, the higher Courts, especially the successive Synods, are still prevailing liberal, not to say "Modern," and not only render prosecutions for heresy almost uniformly unsuccessful, but are even endeavouring, as we have seen, to take out of the hands of the orthodox every instrument of doctrinal restriction.

The mutual reproaches and jealousies, the constant collisions, the increasing bitterness of the parties, were becoming intolerable. The propositions of Diest Lorgion and Scholten in the Synod of 1872, put the spark to the train. Dr. Cramer, of Amsterdam, published a pamphlet, entitled, "Where are we going?" in which he questioned the moral, if not the legal, right of the Synod to take action in such important matters. He declared that it could not be said to represent the Church; that it had fallen into disrepute, almost into contempt; that it was in every way incompetent to deal with such a vital question as it had taken in

hand; and that it was going about it in quite the wrong way in endeavouring to keep together two schools which could not exist except apart. Let a "Constituent Assembly" be called, an Assembly of genuine representatives of the Church, and let it deal at once and for ever with this question of the maintenance or abandonment of the "confessional" character of the Church. Let the defeated party, whether Orthodox or "Modern," accept its defeat, pack up its traps and *go*, and let an end be put at last to this miserable jangling and quarrelling!

On the appearance of "Where are we going?" the sky was darkened by a storm of pamphlets. "We are not going *there!*" "Constituent or no?" "Thoughts on the Re-organization of the Church Government," &c. &c. Addresses flowed in from all quarters, and the Church papers were full of the great question. Even the "Dissenting" bodies, especially the Evangelical Lutherans, caught the infection, and had quite a respectable little shower of pamphlets on their own account.\*

The Synod of 1873 saw that some more radical treatment of the disease than that which their predecessors had left them as a legacy was urgently needed, and appointed a "Committee of Nine," as it has always been called, or "Committee of Advice concerning a Re-organization of the Church and the Church Government," as its official title ran, to endeavour to find some means by which an end might be put to the present state of affairs, and the "various parties might exist and remain together in one Church communion." The nine members of this Committee belonged to three schools: three were orthodox, three "Modern," and three intermediate. It was looked upon as a hopeful sign that all of them accepted the commission. The meeting

\* See Section *d*.

of the Synod was adjourned to February 11, 1874, and was then to receive the report of the Committee.

Some voices were raised in protest. The ultra-confessionalists complained that they had no representative; Professor Doedes,\* of Utrecht, sneered at the tactics of the "Moderns," who *first* signed a declaration and *then* attempted to remove it for conscience' sake. He declared that it was not desirable to find a means by which Orthodox and Moderns could live together. But, as a rule, the composition of the Committee gave satisfaction, and all the parties assumed a "waiting attitude."

Towards the end of 1873, the "Committee of Nine" published its report in a thick pamphlet of 146 octavo pages; but, alas! it was not one, but *five* reports.

The Committee unanimously recommended a re-organization of the Church Government, by which a really representative Synod of one hundred members, in which the lay element was well represented, should meet once in four years, and should be the supreme legislative body, without having to submit to any veto. The present Synod (without the professors or the representative of the churches of the Indies, and otherwise modified) was to become a sort of Committee of the General Synod (to be called the "Synodal Government"), was to prepare business for it, and to act as the medium of communication between the public and the Synod, &c. Other alterations of less importance were proposed; but the essential feature of the scheme was the formation of a supreme governing body, which should be truly representative, and should enjoy the full confidence of the Church.

So much for the re-organization of the Church Government; but on the re-organization of the Church itself, the

\* A pillar of the Orthodox school.

Committee was unable to get even a bare majority for any one scheme, and therefore sent in *four* reports.

The *first section* (orthodox) recommended a doctrinal armistice, with the maintenance of the present formulæ of subscription, until a truly representative body should provide for the maintenance and revision of the doctrine of the Reformed Church in accordance with the Netherland Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of the Synod of Dort. A permanent union of Orthodox and "Moderns" it regarded as undesirable and impossible.

The *second section* (intermediate) recommended the maintenance of the present doctrinal restrictions and the provision for minorities, by giving them the choice of a certain number (in proportion to their relative strength) of the pastors, where there are more than one, or (where there is only one pastor, or where the minority is too small to be entitled to any appointments, but still considerable) the occasional use of one of the churches for public worship, to be conducted by some pastor selected for the occasion by the minority.

The majority (*viz.* two) of the *third section* (Modern) presented a very elaborate report. It recommended that in every congregation, where a sufficient proportion of the members unite for the purpose, they should be allowed to form an independent "Parish," with power to appoint its own pastor (or pastors), and to decide the *doctrinal* conditions of membership of its community. In all other respects, its members were to be simply a part of the congregation, and it was to have no independent existence. No doctrinal test or declaration was to be required of pastors or members of the Reformed Church *as such*. It is curious, and I think not accidental, that, so far as I have been able to observe, there is nothing in the wording of the constitution proposed

by this section which would exclude women from the ecclesiastical franchise.

The minority (one) of the *third section* gave in a short report, in which optimism and pessimism are curiously blended, and which is really little more than a sermon on the duty of mutual forbearance.

It is obvious that the scheme of the majority of the third section is the only one that can be said to provide for the necessities of the case at all, and even it shews how very slight the bond of Church communion must be if it is to embrace all the parties. This project, it has been cleverly said, "proposed to let the house in flats. The Orthodox might have the cellars to live in, and might make it as dark there as they had a mind to. The Evangelicals might rent the ground-floor, and, if they found the windows too large, might temper the too strong light by hanging heavy damask curtains before them. The Moderns might take the top story, with leave to put in as many windows as they liked, and let the light and air stream in from every side. And then there would still be a few attics for any one who had a fancy to live by himself. No doubt the psalm-singing below might annoy those above, and the noise from above might disturb those below; but still, if each had a separate entrance, and nothing need ever take them into each other's rooms, why, at any rate, they might all live under the same roof; and on the front of the house (which would need a little painting and repairing outside, by the way), might be written in big letters, 'Reformed Church of the Netherlands.'"

Such were the plans submitted to the Synod at its adjourned meeting on February 11. The Synod took them all, as well as several others, into careful consideration, and

finally determined to adopt, as the basis of its proposed re-organization of the Church, the principle advocated by the *second* section, retaining the doctrinal declaration, but giving minorities the power of electing pastors, or obtaining the use of churches, in proportion to their numerical strength.

In accordance with this resolution, a number of alterations in the machinery of election of Church officers, and especially of pastors, were suggested for the consideration of the Classic Assemblies, Church Governments, &c., together with certain measures to prevent the arbitrary rejection on doctrinal grounds of candidates for membership.

With regard to the re-organization of the Church Government, the Synod shrank from any such radical change as that suggested in the "Report," and contented itself with proposals to secure the representation of the lay element in the Synod by giving six seats to elders, to approximate in some degree to a more even distribution of the elective strength of the various districts, and to ensure continuity of action on the part of successive Synods, by appointing the representatives for three years, and arranging that one-third of them should retire (in rotation) each year.

It was obvious at once that these well-meant but timid measures would give little satisfaction. The regulations for the improvement of the representative character of the Synod, though by no means adequate, were good as far as they went, and were well received by the Classic Assemblies; but the more important question of the rights of minorities and the footing of the various parties in the Church had been dealt with in a way that satisfied no one. It became abundantly evident that such a compromise was simply impossible. Either the doctrinal character of the Church must be maintained, in which case neither minorities nor

majorities had any rights at all unless they were orthodox, or it must be dropped, in which case the formula of subscription must be dropped also.

The Synod of 1874 did not abandon any of the projects of its predecessor, in spite of the very unfavourable reports of the Classic Assemblies, &c., but yet felt that it must do more than merely carry them on, and accordingly tried to go to the root of the matter by dealing with the eleventh article in the Constitution of the Church, which defines the general objects at which the members of all the various governing bodies are to aim, as "care for the interests of the Christian Church in general and the Reformed Church in particular, the *maintenance of her doctrine*, the increase of religious knowledge, the furtherance of Christian morals, the preservation of order and unity, and the quickening of love for King and Fatherland."

It was felt that as long as this "maintenance of doctrine" was left as a standing order to all officers of the Church, it was idle to talk of any compromise.

The Synod accordingly drew up the following article as a substitute, and published an elaborate report of a sub-committee to defend and explain it:

"The doctrine contained in the Netherland Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of the Synod of Dort, forms the historical foundation of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands.

"Inasmuch as this doctrine is not confessed with sufficient unanimity by the community, there can, under the existing circumstances, be no possibility of 'maintaining the doctrine' in the ecclesiastical sense. The community, building on the principles of the Church, as manifested in her origin and development, continues to confess her Chris-

tian faith, and thereby to form the expression which may in course of time once more become the adequate and unanimous Confession of the Church.

“Meantime, care for the interests of the Christian Church in general and the Reformed in particular, quickening of Christian religion and morality, increase of religious knowledge, preservation of order and unity, and furtherance of love for King and Fatherland, are ever the main object of all to whom any ecclesiastical office is entrusted, and no one can be rejected as a member or a teacher who, complying with all other requirements, declares himself to be convinced in his own conscience that, in compliance with the above-named principles, he may belong to the Reformed Church of the Netherlands.”

The position of things when the Synod of 1874 rose was therefore as follows. The advice of the various ecclesiastical bodies had been received on (1) the proposed reforms in the Synod; (2) the proposed alterations in the machinery for electing Church councils and pastors, with an ultimate view to securing the rights of minorities; (3) the proposed modifications in the regulation for the examination and admission of Church members. On all these points, therefore, the Synod had been able to submit definite propositions to the Church Governments to receive their final decision. Their fate was what might have been anticipated from the reception they had received at the earlier stage of their progress. Nos. 2 and 3 were rejected; No. 1 accepted.

But the Synod, as we have seen, had not only carried on and put into their final shape the suggestions of its predecessor, but had also struck out a new line in the proposed modification of Article XI. This proposal, not having yet passed through the preliminary stage of being submitted for criticism and suggestion to the Classic Assemblies, &c.,



cannot be dealt with finally at present. But, as far as can be gathered from public utterances, it is looked upon by all parties as one of the most unfortunate attempts at legislation which has ever been conceived. "The law," says the author of an anonymous pamphlet, "commands or forbids; it does not relate. . . . . If [the Synod] had wished to make this communication to the Church, 'You once had a doctrine and a confession; you have none now; mind you make another!' it might have done so by means of a circular or pamphlet; but the attempt to accomplish it by a legal enactment, shews small skill in the art of drawing up and promulgating laws."

We may safely assume that nothing will come of this suggested alteration.

A sustained attempt has therefore been made to heal the wounds of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands. Men of all parties have joined in this attempt, and have given their most serious attention to the problems it involves. Scholars and pastors have spent precious months which might have borne rich fruits for scientific and practical theology in discussing and suggesting schemes of ecclesiastical reform. Pamphlets have fallen like rain, and the "religious" papers have been and still are flooded with dissertations and discussions bearing upon the same subjects; and the total result, so far, has been an improvement in the constitution of the Synod, which, however desirable in itself, leaves, and apparently will leave, every question of vital importance exactly where it was!

It need hardly surprise us to find that some of the actors in this drama are getting as thoroughly weary of it as the spectators have long been, and that many voices are now heard crying for a peaceable separation, since a peaceable dwelling together is no longer possible. The attempt to

settle the terms of continued partnership was made under the most favourable circumstances and in the best way possible. Its failure shews that its task was one which could not be accomplished. Surely the "Moderns" will soon find their position morally and materially unbearable, and, having proved the impossibility of making it bearable, will seek a means of quitting it upon honourable terms.

If such a division of the Reformed Church is inevitable, the sooner attention is withdrawn from all kinds of efforts to prevent it, and concentrated upon the best means of accomplishing it, the better for Holland and for humanity; for the spectacle of a Free Church, adorned with learning and piety such as few Churches can boast, supported by a large section of an energetic and thoughtful nation, untrammelled by liturgies or doctrinal traditions, pursuing its independent course, will be one of intensest interest to the civilized world, and will give a fair trial to the power in the nineteenth century of an organized but unshackled Church, free from all moral complications, and bringing with it something of a national prestige.

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(b.) THE REMONSTRANT BROTHERHOOD.

(Percentage of total Population in 1869, % 00·15.)

The origin of the Remonstrant Brotherhood is a matter of universal history, and may be treated very briefly here.

In 1603, Jacob Arminius (Armijn) was appointed Professor of Theology at Leiden, and his lectures soon shewed that his adhesion to the standard orthodoxy of his Church was anything but complete, especially in the matter of predestination. Several men of note shared his heresies (which

were of a very moderate description); but his colleague Gomarus (Gommer) was bitterly opposed to him. Arminius himself died in 1609, but his party survived him, and in 1610 sent in the "Remonstrance" to which it owes its name, to the States of (the Province of) Holland, explaining its opinions and claiming the protection of the State.

The Remonstrants recognized the right and the duty of the State to take a part in the affairs of the Church, which their opponents denied.

Many disgraceful scenes of violence occurred, and the Remonstrants suffered much. Unhappily, personal jealousies in high quarters complicated and intensified the bitterness of the party feeling; for Prince Maurice, the son and successor of William the Silent, made use of the Contra-Remonstrant furor as a tool with which to crush his rival, the great and good Oldenbarnvelt.

At last, in 1618 and 1619, the opinions of the Remonstrants were formally condemned at the famous Synod of Dort, and by an exquisite "irony of events," the Remonstrants were persecuted and exiled by that very temporal power to which, in opposition to their rivals, they allowed the right of regulating the affairs of the Church!

For some years the Remonstrants were subject to great hardship and much persecution; but in 1625, Maurice was succeeded by his brother, Frederick Henry, who endeavoured to restrain the violence of the Contra-Remonstrants, and did much towards securing the Remonstrants in the undisturbed exercise of their religious rights,—for which, of course, he was called "Jeroboam" and other such names.

The civic authorities of Amsterdam took the Remonstrants under their protection, and even allowed them to found a seminary there in 1634. This seminary was removed to Leiden about three years ago, in order that the students

might have the advantage of attending the lectures at the University.

The creed which the early Remonstrants had drawn up was regarded from the very first (as was expressly declared in 1634), "not as a rule of faith, but as an expression of opinion," and the Remonstrants of the present day are justly proud of requiring no doctrinal declaration or subscription of any kind from pastors or laymen, except in the case of a pastor who goes over from some other community, who must make a general declaration of adhesion to the gospel of Christ as presented in the Scriptures. It is to be hoped that this "survival" of the theory of subscription may soon be dispensed with.

The "ejected" of 1619 were about three hundred in number, and were most of them preachers; but now there are only twenty-one Remonstrant congregations in Holland.

The present constitution of the Brotherhood dates from 1861. It is governed by a "Great Assembly," which consists of all the officiating pastors, several officials, certain honorary members, and lay deputies from all the congregations. It meets once a year, and is the supreme governing body of the Brotherhood; but each congregation enjoys a very large degree of freedom and self-government.

Great variety of opinion exists among the Remonstrants, but they exercise the widest mutual toleration. Freedom is their pride and joy, and each party recognizes the distinct right of the other party to a place within the fold. The prevailing feeling is decidedly towards "Modernism."

Several movements towards a re-union between the Remonstrants and the Reformed Church have been made, but without success. When the failure of the efforts of the "Moderns" to remove the difficulties in the way of their remaining in the Reformed Church is recognized, it seems

quite possible that the significance of the Remonstrant Brotherhood will become very great, and that a large exodus from the Egypt of subscription to the Canaan of the Free Baptist and Remonstrant communions may be anticipated. Several premonitory symptoms of such an event have already appeared.

The reader will hardly have failed to observe the curious analogy between the history of the Remonstrants and that of the English Presbyterian and Free Christian Churches. The attempt to make the mother Church more tolerant, the ejection, the persecution, the toleration, the free development of religious life, the aversion to subscription, the mutual toleration and even sympathetic co-operation of men differing widely in opinion, are so many points of striking similarity in the past and present of the Dutch Remonstrants and the English Free Churches.

The numbers of the Remonstrants have never been very large, and are now exceedingly small ; but the Church which numbered Episcopius and Grotius among its first adherents, still has representatives who vindicate for it an honourable place among the Churches of Holland.

Of those whose names have become celebrated in the records of modern theology, the Remonstrants may claim Tiele, Maronier and (now) Hooykaas.

Many interesting particulars as to the Remonstrants and their seminary will be found in an article by the late Rev. J. J. Tayler, *Theological Review*, January, 1868.

## (c.) BAPTIST COMMUNITIES.\*

(Percentage of total population in 1869, % 1.24.)

The controversies as to the origin and history of the Baptist communities of Holland have produced quite an extensive literature, and in many cases appear still to be far from settled.

It seems to be clearly established by Hoekstra, however, that the original "Anti-pædo-baptists" were the spiritual ancestors alike of the "Anabaptists" and of the "Baptists," and that these last owed their origin to a reaction against the fanaticism of the Anabaptists, who exaggerated and abused the principle of the immediate guidance of the Church by the Holy Spirit. The Baptists, on their side, fell into the opposite error of a servile adherence to the letter of the Scripture.

The Dutch Baptists look upon Menno Simons (1496—1561 A. D.) and Dirk Philips (baptized 1534) as their founders, and are often called "Mennonites," after the first-named.

The leading principle of the old Baptists is to be found in their conception of the "community without spot or wrinkle," to which all must belong who would be saved. The Baptists could not look upon salvation as a matter which lay between God and the individual soul alone. The *community* was an essential link in the scheme of salvation; and to be saved, it was necessary, not only to obey God's commandments and have faith in Christ individually, but also to belong to the "community without spot or wrinkle."

This being so, it became a simple act of self-defence to

\* Special authority, Hoekstra's book on the Old Baptists, "Leer der Oude Doopsgezinden." 1863.

remove any visible "spot or wrinkle" from the community; and hence the constant use of the "ban" or excommunication by the early Baptists. According to Dirk Philips, the use of the "ban" was one of the seven marks which distinguished the true Church from all others; and so freely was it employed, that a certain Jan van Ophoorn gradually placed under the ban all the Baptists (including his own congregation) who were not under it already, and literally left no one but himself and his wife to form the kingdom of God!

The "organic principle" of the Baptists thus applied, naturally proved an irresistible disorganizing power, and though rooted in the very essence of the original Baptist conception of the Church, the "ban" was gradually dropped.

In more or less close connection with the leading idea of a community separated from the world, stand several peculiarities of the Baptists, such as their original dislike of a regular ministry, their refusal to serve as soldiers, or to take an oath, &c. In these and other particulars they present strong analogies to the Society of Friends. The objection to judicial oaths, which is recognized by the State, still remains among the Dutch Baptists, but the other "points" are dropped.

The Baptist movement was from the first intensely practical, and was inspired by a deep dislike of the Protestant preaching of salvation by faith alone. "Repentance and amendment" was the alpha and omega of its gospel. It was, in fact, much more *legal* than *evangelical* in its genius. Partly from this horror of anything that might look like separating salvation from repentance and amendment, partly from rigid scripturalism, rose the practice of adult baptism, from which the Church derives its name. Indeed, the sacraments were not valued at all except as signs of

membership of the kingdom of God, and, above all, as acts of obedience to Jesus. It was quite in keeping with this conception of the sacraments, that the Lord's Supper should often be accompanied by "washing the feet" of (especially) visitors from other congregations. The practice of adult baptism is still preserved.

The practical nature of the Baptist movement caused doctrinal matters to take a very secondary place in the development of the Churches, and though Adam Pastor was put under the "ban" by Dirk Philips for expressing Arian opinions, yet, as a rule, doctrinal grounds were not recognized as sufficient to justify exclusion from the community. Hoekstra has shewn that both Dirk Philips and Menno Simons, though they believed themselves to be perfectly orthodox, were in reality equally far from understanding and from accepting the complete system of orthodoxy.

The slight value attached to doctrine, as such, tended to prevent the establishment of a creed among the Baptists; and the difficulty of uniting people by the "ban," made Church organization nearly impossible; but perhaps the fact that the early Baptists had not a single intellectual or organizing genius amongst them, contributed still more towards the failure of all attempts to establish either a creed or a constitution. Dirk Philips and Menno Simons were very commonplace men from an intellectual point of view, wanting alike in culture and originality, and they were the leaders of the Church.

Be the cause what it may, however, the result is, that to this day the Baptist churches are entirely without a creed and without a constitution.

Left to their own free development, these churches have of course undergone rapid and extensive changes. "There are still thousands in the Lutheran and Reformed Church



who agree in the main with the *doctrine* of the founders of this Church; and however many have departed from this doctrine, still one cannot say that the Lutheran or Reformed Church of our day sets out from other *principles* than those adopted at first; but you would search Holland in vain for a single Baptist who is faithful to the doctrine or the principles of Menno and Philips with respect to the founding of a community without spot or wrinkle, or who even thinks that he is so." \*

At present, no Baptist thinks of attempting to exclude any one from the brotherhood on account of doctrinal differences. Even the two remaining peculiarities of practice—adult baptism and objection to a judicial oath—are only regarded by one section of the Baptists as essential to membership of the brotherhood. Practical virtue is still the burden of the teaching of the Baptists, and they enjoy a high reputation for integrity. The absence of a creed, at first almost an accident, is now their pride and joy; and freedom of conscience has become their favourite motto.

In Church organization they are still quite without central government. Each church governs itself in absolute independence, even if it receives pecuniary aid from the "General Baptist Society," a representative body which has met once a year at Amsterdam ever since 1811, but has no power whatsoever over the separate churches. In many of the Baptist churches, women have votes, and in some they act as deaconesses. The hymn-books and order of service differ in the different churches.

The General Baptist Society has founded a theological seminary at Amsterdam. Hoekstra, who occupies a distinguished place in the first rank of "Modern" theologians, is Professor there.

\* Hoekstra.

In spite of its widely different origin, the Baptist Church, it will be observed, now offers many striking points of similarity to our own Presbyterian churches. Indeed, there are whole pages of Hoekstra's book which might be copied almost *literatim* into an account of the present position and function of the Free Presbyterian churches of England.

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(d.) EVANGELICAL LUTHERANS. \*

(Percentage of total population in 1869, % 1.61.)

We may deal very briefly with the Lutherans, as their Church and its recent history present few features to distinguish them generically from the Reformed.

Lutheran churches existed in Holland from very early times, and gradually consolidated, until, in the year 1791, a secession of the most orthodox members of the body took place at Amsterdam. This was the nucleus of the restored Lutheran Church, in which, however, signs of the growth of a more liberal spirit are by no means wanting.

The Evangelical Lutherans are now governed by a Synod, which is not subject to the limitations of power imposed upon that of the Reformed Church, and can therefore settle matters at once. Between the meetings of the Synod, a Synodal Commission has considerable executive powers, which it also exceeds considerably.

The pastors have to declare that they accept and believe, will teach and maintain, "the doctrine which, according to God's holy Word, is contained in the accepted symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," and also that

\* Special authorities, pamphlets by Poolman and De Bosch Kemper.

they "will faithfully and diligently preach Christ and Christianity according to the Scripture."

There are the same disputes in the Lutheran as in the Reformed Church. In 1872, an orthodox Synodal Committee took upon itself to express surprise and grief because some Lutheran pastors made use of religious hand-books written by members of other communions; and it also rejected a candidate for the ministry because it (the Committee) did not see how he (the candidate) could sign the required declaration honestly: The candidate himself said he could, but the Committee declined to accept his assurance.

These and other causes gave rise to a hot controversy, in which the ex-Professor De Bosch Kemper maintained the complete doctrinal freedom of the Lutheran pastors, and desired to modify the formula of subscription in such a way as to place this freedom beyond all question.

The Synod of 1873 declined to adopt this scheme, but was of opinion that no candidate for the ministry, who shewed competent knowledge, ought to be rejected on account of his doctrinal opinions; and that the formula of subscription ought to be interpreted in the widest and most liberal sense.

Since 1816, the Evangelical Lutherans have had a seminary at Amsterdam.

Professor Loman has gained a high position among "Modern" scholars.

## (e.) CONCLUSION.

A few words may be said, in conclusion, upon some points which have not yet been treated.

The only formal vestige, so far as I know, of the ancient dominancy of the Reformed Church, is now to be found in the relation in which the Theological Faculties of the three National Universities stand to it.

The Professors of Theology at the National Universities must be qualified as Reformed pastors, and are *ex officio* occasional preachers in the University cities.

This exclusive privilege is, I believe, the only remains of any special connection between the State and the Reformed Church, and, as is naïvely observed by a Reformed writer, "however satisfactory this arrangement may be to the Reformed Church," it is out of harmony with the spirit of the age, and cannot survive the next "Universities Bill." It is sincerely to be hoped that the Theological Faculties will still be maintained, though not in the special interests of the Reformed Church; but the question is hotly debated, and it is very possible that the Theological Faculties, as such, will be abolished, and the Theological Chairs and Subjects distributed amongst the Literary and Philosophical Faculties.

Other denominations receive Government help towards the expenses of their seminaries, and it is not the mere fact that public support is given to the Reformed Professors of Theology that is considered invidious, but that this support is enjoyed in connection with the *National Universities*.

The separation of Church and State in general is not complete in Holland. The extensive pecuniary grants made

by the Government, give it the right, and even impose on it the duty, of exercising a certain amount of control over the communities which receive them. One writer thinks the State ought to go on granting the money, but ought "to make no ungenerous use" of the power it thereby gains. Another desires the State to withdraw, as soon as possible, all grants which it is not bound by the Constitution of 1815 (see p. 14) to make, and when the Constitution is again revised, to reduce them still further towards a vanishing point.

Besides the powers springing from its financial relations to the Churches, the Government still reserves to itself certain curious powers deemed necessary in the interest of public order. For instance, no foreigner can take office in any church without the sanction of the King; no church can be built within two hundred metres (696 feet) of another church without the sanction of the local authorities (with appeal to higher authorities—finally, to the Crown): the civic authorities may prohibit the use of church bells in any place where more than one religious body has a place of worship, &c.

No officiating clergyman of a recognized Church can sit in parliament.

Nominally, almost every one seems to be in favour of completing the "separation of Church and State;"\* but the difference of meaning attached to the expression by different individuals is so great, that its common use shews but little common feeling.

\* In spite of the vigorous and eloquent protest recently made by Opzoomer, one of the founders of the "Modern" school.

## APPENDIX.

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 ON THE CHARACTER OF THE "MODERN SCHOOL" OF  
 THEOLOGY IN HOLLAND.

The religious movement known in Holland as that of the "Modern School," the "New School," or sometimes the "School of Leiden," is essentially a branch of that wider religious movement extending over the whole of Europe and America, which is a direct product upon the field of religion of the whole intellectual life of the nineteenth century.

This Modern School, in the larger sense, is in fact essentially the religious phase of that undefinable *Zeit-Geist*, or spirit of the age, sometimes called on the Continent "modern consciousness," the most characteristic feature of which is a profound conviction of the *organic unity*, whether spiritual or material, of the universe.\*

This modern consciousness can make no permanent treaty of peace with the belief which takes both the history and the philosophical science of *religion* out of organic connection with history and philosophical science in general. No compromise, no mere profession of a frank acceptance of the principles of the modern view of the world, can in the long run avail. The Traditional school cannot content the claims

\* See Professor Rauwenhoff's "Geschiedenis van het Protestantisme" (History of Protestantism), 1871.

of the *Zeit-Geist* by concessions. Ultimately it must either defy it or yield to it unconditionally.

Now some modern thinkers believe that religion, or at least Theistic religion, must itself fall when its present supports give way; but others are convinced that it is a factor of human nature of permanent and supreme importance, and it is this latter section of modern thinkers who fill the ranks of modern theology.

The task of modern theology, then, is to bring all parts of the history of religion into organic connection with each other and with the general history of man, and to find in the human faculties themselves, not in something extraneous to them, the foundations of religious faith.

All that can be attempted in this Appendix is to give some slight indication of the chief characteristics of the contributions made towards the solution of these problems by the present generation of liberal Dutch theologians.

1. The "Modern" movement in Holland is characterized by a remarkable degree of self-consciousness. Its leaders seem to have a more than usually distinct and definite conception of what they are to do and how they are to do it. They are not unconsciously or half-consciously carried away by the spirit of the age; they do not yield to it through an instinct of self-preservation; but they are fully and frankly in sympathy with it, and are at the same time deeply convinced of the truth of their religious faith; and they have therefore set themselves to work deliberately and with perfect consciousness to *conquer* the religious field *for* the modern spirit, not to *defend it against* it, and this in the cause of truth, in the cause of humanity, and in the cause of religion itself.

2. The most cursory observer cannot fail to notice the remarkably intimate connection which exists in Holland

between Philosophy and "Modern" Theology. Scholten, Opzoomer and Kuenen, are the three men whose names rise spontaneously in my mind when I think of the founders of the "Modern" school in Holland, and were I asked to add a fourth name, it would be that of Hoekstra; though he has been more of an independent leader than a founder of the school. Of these, Opzoomer is a professed philosopher, and a theologian only incidentally, so to speak, in his philosophical capacity. Scholten and Hoekstra have both written expressly philosophical works, and through all the "phases of faith" of the former, whose history is a kind of epitome of that of the "Modern" school in general, may be traced a two-fold development; on the one hand religious, and on the other philosophical. Kuenen has, I believe, published no expressly philosophical works, but those who have heard his lectures on "Christian Ethics" can bear witness to his extraordinary grasp of philosophical subjects.

3. In apparent contrast, but in real harmony, with this philosophical character of Dutch "Modern" theology, as well as with the definiteness and self-consciousness of the movement, stand the thoroughness and fearlessness with which its most revolutionary conclusions have been carried (even down to minutiae) into the pulpit and the class-room, or, in other words, the extent to which it has been popularized.

In the catechisms and class-books for children, and in the ordinary sermons of the "Modern" pastors, such points as the mythical or legendary character of the miraculous narratives of the Bible, or the polytheism of the Israelites down to a comparatively late period, together with the most recent conclusions of biblical criticism as to the composition of the books of the Old and New Testaments, are treated



with just the same openness as in works of professed research and criticism.

4. The Dutch "Moderns," in spite of many differences upon matters of very great importance, nevertheless appear to form a school of greater compactness than is to be found elsewhere in the liberal ranks. Following more definite principles, with clearer self-consciousness and more rigorous consistency, they have come to more definite (though less stereotyped) conclusions than have fallen to the lot of others. This is no doubt to be attributed in part to the comparatively small number of the Dutch theologians, and still more to the ascendancy at present enjoyed by some few powerful minds; but I think it must also be attributed in great measure to the clearness and sobriety of the Dutch intellect, and to the single-minded love of truth, which seems in Holland to be, as a rule, less alloyed with the desire of personal triumph in controversy and research than is too often the case elsewhere. Largely owing to the example and influence of Kuenen, I believe, the Dutch "Modern" theologians appear to look upon their compeers, whether at home or abroad, not as rivals, but as fellow-workers, and to watch the controversial fate of their own contributions to the discussion of any subject with almost as much of the impartiality of the judge as if they did not feel the interest of a father in them. Brutuses in the field of theological literature are rare, but Holland has produced more than one!

Such appear to me to be some of the chief characteristics of the contributions recently made by Holland towards the solution of the problems of modern theology. Within the limits now at my disposal, it is impossible to attempt even

the most rapid sketch of the history and opinions of the Dutch "Moderns," and I must be content with one or two disconnected statements, which may perhaps serve as landmarks to give the English reader some rough conception of their theological position.

The "Modern" school, then, is generally supposed to date from about the year 1857, and was the result mainly of the dogmatic and historical teaching of Professor Scholten, of Leiden, and the philosophical teaching of Professor Opzoomer, of Utrecht. The "Moderns" were characterized from the first by the clearness of their conceptions and the fearless and outspoken manner in which they preached what they believed. That *revelation* was something essentially internal and individual, which could not possibly be "objectified," and that Christianity was no more supernatural in its origin, its concomitant circumstances, its history or its essence, than any other religion, were perhaps the main points in the positive and negative teaching of the "Moderns." They were taught, however, not as barren and abstract truths, but in their detailed application carried out to all their results.

"Only put yourself," says a writer in the weekly organ of the Moderns,\* "in the position of those who had never received any other teaching, for example, than that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, and suddenly heard their pastor speak on some Christmas-day of 'the simple parents of the man of Nazareth,' or on Easter Sunday of 'the delusion of the early Christians that Jesus had returned to earth from his grave.' . . . . Yet such preaching was actually heard. . . . . The Church listened, thought it over, thought it over again, and finally a large number of her members accepted the new teaching."

\* Hervorming, Jan. 2, 1873.

I am often asked whether the "Moderns" are Unitarians. The question is rather startling. It is as if one were asked whether the majority of English astronomers had ceased to uphold the Ptolemaic system yet. The best answer I can give is a reference to the chapter on "God" in a popular work by Dr. Matthes which has run through four editions. In this chapter there is not a word about the Trinity, but at the close occurs this foot-note: "On the antiquated doctrine of the *Trinity*, see the fourteenth note at the end of the book,"—where, accordingly, the doctrine is expounded and its confusions pointed out rather with the calm interest of the antiquarian than the eagerness of the controversialist.

The manner in which the "schools" of theology cut across the various ecclesiastical communities in Holland, is well exemplified by the composition of the editorial staff of the "Theologisch Tijdschrift," the chief organ of the "modern" research. Its editors are Van Bell, Kuenen and Rauwenhoff, Professors of Theology at the Universities of Groningen and Leiden; Hoekstra, Professor at the Baptist seminary at Amsterdam; Loman, Professor at the Lutheran seminary at Amsterdam; and Tiele, Professor at the Remonstrant seminary at Leiden. Imagine a journal of scientific theology in England edited by three Anglican Professors of Theology at National Universities in conjunction with the Principals of New College, Chilwell College and Manchester New College!

The literary activity of the "Moderns" has been really surprising. Besides a great number of popular works, they have made contributions to Biblical criticism, and to the history and philosophy\* of religion, to an extent out of all proportion to their numbers, and of the very highest value;

\* Philosophically, most of the Moderns are "determinists," or, as we have been accustomed until lately to call it, "necessarians."

but the position which they now hold, and the fact that although their preaching has been what is called "extreme" to an extent we can hardly realize in England, they have already gained the hearty support of an actual majority of church members in some towns, and of a large minority in almost all, shew that, in spite of their great intellectual activity, their main strength has flowed through the channels of the heart, and that their "epistle of commendation" is to be found, not in the works with which they have enriched the shelves of the student, but in the homes and hearts of those who have found in their teaching the Gospel of Life.



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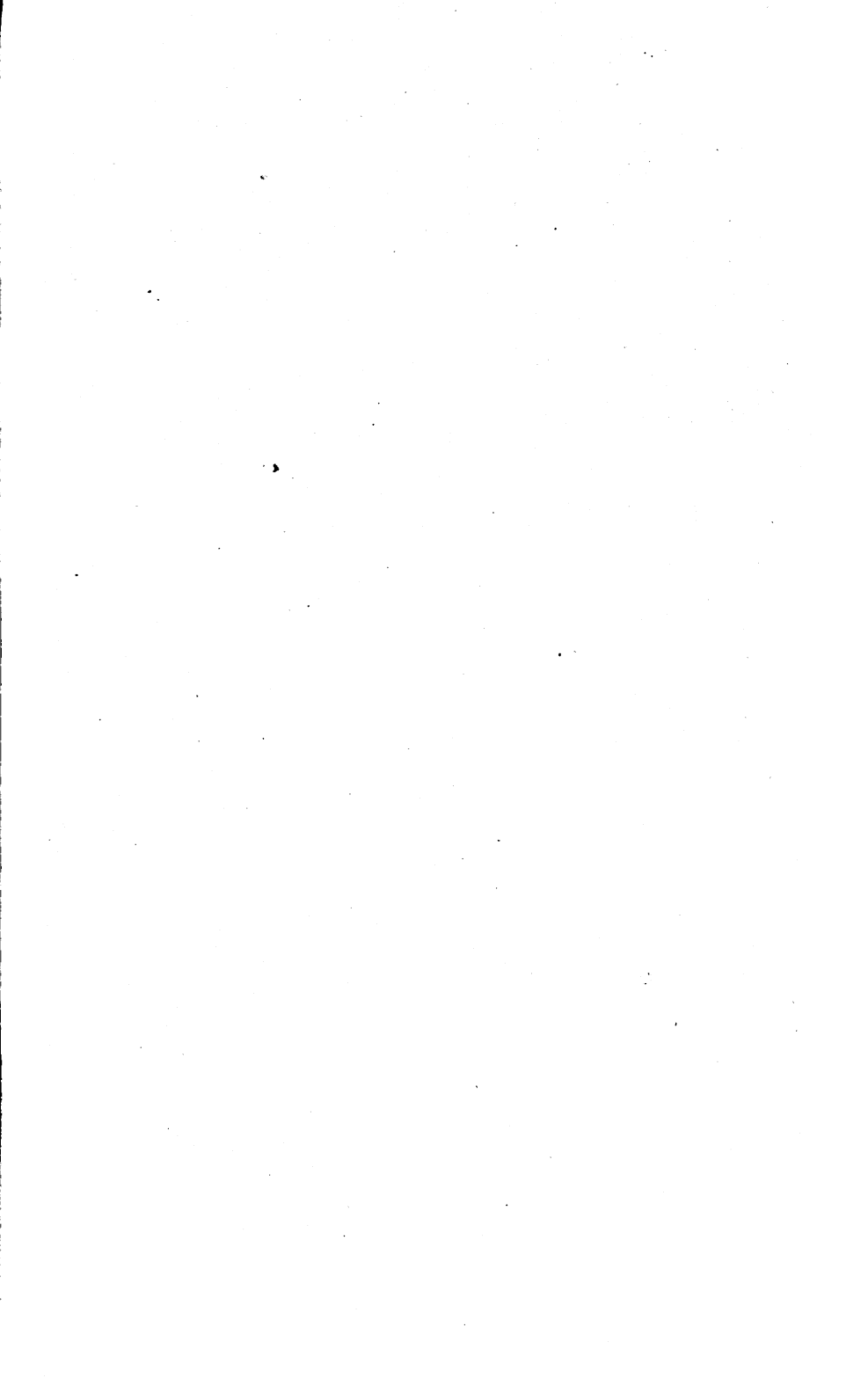
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